

PSYCHOBIOLOGICAL ASPECTS OF SOCIAL AND HUMAN CAPITAL DEFICITS

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Summary

Human and social capital plays a significant role in the development of modern civil societies. When the structure and quality of the society deteriorates, one can observe concurrent social and human capital deficiency.

In this work the author made an attempt to evaluate the causes, conditioning and the results of these phenomena with emphasis placed on the psychological aspects of this deficiency within both types of capital. Such analyses are frequently not considered in sociological-economical studies. Therefore the diagnosis of the relationships between the socio-economic situation, the functioning of the society and the resources of human and social capital may be incomplete.

In this work the author has examined the existence of two-sided relationships like feedback between the quality and the structure of the society and the resources of social and human capital. The deterioration of the functioning of society structures may be the cause as well as the result of deficiency within these capitals. The quality of human and social capital may be affected by psychobiological factors connected with the general state of the society including personality features and structure in the individual and social aspect.

MATERIAL AND METHODES

Human and social capital plays a significant role in the development of modern civil societies. Economists and sociologists who deal with the relationship between social and human capital argue that voluntary action for the sake of achieving common goals and of improving welfare by means of support is an indispensable element of social capital.

There are many factors characterizing and encompassing the civil society's structure, preferred values, environmental influences, motives of acting and their effectiveness. These factors are closely related to human and social capital

and any deficiencies in these particular capital components usually result in the difficulty in their creation and growth. When cheap resources as well as quick and easy ways of achieving economical growth are running out, the development of the society will not be possible without properly formed social and human capitals and mutual trust, and a feeling of attachment and solidarity within them (1).

Recent research by the Index of Citizen Society in Poland demonstrates that the quality, structure and the state of the civil society have deteriorated (1,5).

In such a situation it is very important to conduct actions aiming at restoring the disturbed balance by recreating and supporting these elements of social and human capital which guarantee social and economic development.

Within the social capital these elements include the body of norms, a network of common trust, a feeling of loyalty and bond within a social group, institution or organization aimed at accomplishing the desired goals (8). The social capital is very often referred to the different features of the structure and functioning of the citizen society such as social attitude, systems or connections of norms, in which the reference point is the level of the country's and society's functioning. Bourdieu (3) defines social capital in a slightly different way describing it as a set of real and potential resources connected with the existence of networks dependent on common trust among the members of a given social group. Looked at from this perspective, the social capital should function within a system that would also include the economic, political and cultural capital.

Too strong inner bonds within the social capital can lead to bad effects such as alienating people who do not belong to a certain group or organization, using compulsion or putting pressure on people from outside the system, limiting the freedom of different people functioning in the network of social capital. These are the so called forms of negative social capital which can lead to the development of different social pathologies (bribery, cliques, mafia).

Human capital, on the other hand, is usually understood as the experience, knowledge and skills possessed by specific people - the members of a given society. These are the resources resulting from individuals' psychobiological

features and their developmental potential. These resources are supported by appropriate investment in intellectual, emotional and motivational (education and professional development, specialization, prospering management, suitable selection, etc) development. The features that guarantee possessing resources like knowledge and professional qualifications include the disposition resulting from the individual's mental and physical well-being, which exerts a direct impact on effective functioning in an environment and also on the individual's ability to adjust, his/her creativity and efficiency.

Therefore, investing in individuals' and collective psychobiological potential leads to multiplying those resources of human capital which contribute to the improvement of indices and quality of social capital. On the other hand, any deficits in the area of the two types of capital lead to different irregularities and disorders in different walks of social life. Such a situation results from the strong connections between human and social capital and their importance to proper functioning of a civil society.

One of the reasons of deficits in human capital, and as a result in the social capital as well, may be mistakes or dereliction of actions aimed at forming and using these capitals. Factors and phenomena connected with the deterioration of the quality of these resources are also to blame.

Lower quality of human capital resources may result from, among others, a negative attitude towards adopting certain points of view, lower level of education, lack of trust, weak social bonds, insufficient activity and engagement, low motivation, pessimism, unwillingness or even hostility towards certain norms, ideas or behavior.

The reason for such a variety of attitudes, behavior and reactions are of course complex. However, one may say that they include certain individual features connected with the structure and personality type as well as collective features, most often existing within a certain community and often referred to as a national character or collective consciousness (13, 18). Social, political and economic considerations are in the second group of the causes of social capital deficit. This group has been subjected to sociological and political analyses much more frequently than the previous one.

Different types of crisis affecting countries and communities can lead to serious changes in the functioning of countries and peoples, changing the character of interpersonal relations and social attitudes. This can result in, among others, identity crisis, lack of trust in authority, discouragement, frustration, hostility, conformist or rebellious attitudes. One could observe such changes in Poland after World War II. According to many researchers, a large number of Polish people are lost and disorganized becau-

se of the long-lasting negative influence of history, politics and ideology. These events were, however, independent of them, which makes the state of frustration even worse (12).

The social situation in such cases may be even worse if there are deficits in the resources necessary to counteract pathological phenomena. Individual and collective social frustration can increase if one reinforces the conviction that it is impossible to influence the socio-political strategy or that one has no right to openly interpret the events in accordance with one's own beliefs and values.

Such a social situation is difficult or even critical for many people and requires a great deal of resistance and the ability to deal with stress and use social support, properly, if there is such a possibility. One may notice various mental dysfunctions, especially emotional and stress-related disorders among people who are not equipped with the sufficient number and quality of personal resources or among those who cannot use social support (9, 15, 16).

In a poorly organized and incorrectly functioning country providing social support to those who need it becomes less likely. The reason is that its main components connected with basic bonds, relations and social networks stop operating. Therefore, the buffer effect of support, protecting individuals against the effects of stress, gradually starts to disappear (17).

A bad outer situation, has a negative influence on the individual's ability to constructively deal with stress and on pro-social orientation and even on a flexible and rational way of thinking and acting.

If such a situation is accompanied by poor living conditions (poverty, unemployment, a high rate of social pathology), then even the features conditioning mental resistance do not guarantee positive effects in adaptive-compensation processes. These features include: strong belief in one's strengths, willingness to act, engagement, a feeling of control and treating difficult situations as a chance for development, self-assertiveness, the maturity of personality defensive systems (7).

These types of dispositions can be neutralized and weakened by an unfavourable (objectively and subjectively) social situation, leading to a lower self-esteem, a feeling of lower effectiveness and lower self-control (19).

The results of unfavourable social changes can be even more visible in the area of the society which does not have the so called resistant personality and cannot rely on social support. One should focus here on the results of studies, mainly historical, socio-psychological, but also psychiatric ones, which depict the presence of quantitatively significant unfavourable characterological features and certain behaviours and attitudes among Po-

lish people that are connected with these qualities (13, 18).

The notion of a national character as a set of personality and cultural qualities treated as typical of a given nation, functions as a stereotype based on the conviction that such specific qualities exist. There are also other qualities that form the national character, for instance systems of values, attitudes, beliefs, traditions expressed in art, science and the culture of a given country. The dominating set of psychobiological and cultural-social qualities present in a given population has a specific influence on the different attitudes and behaviours present in a given country.

The results of sociological studies conducted in Poland show the presence of the so called Polish ethnical syndrome which is characterized by weak will, instability of attitudes, primacy of fight and good time over work, pride, envy, a complex of unfulfilled hopes, pugnacity, tolerance. The results correlate with a psychiatric-psychological assessment of the national character of Polish people according to which the features that dominate are psychastemic and skirtotymical-hysteroid qualities. These types refer mainly to temperamental features and are characterized by short-livedness of eagerness, vanity, carelessness, bravery, individualism which frequently transforms into arbitrariness.

They also include theatrical behaviour, moving from one extremity to another, constant search for acceptance and applause, egocentrism, avoiding effort, emotional immaturity, quick discouragement, lack of discipline and decisiveness, lack of faith in one's ability. Dąbrowski completes this list of negative features of the national character with stubbornness, suspicion, impatience, superficiality, pursuit of self-interest, vandalism, poor organizational skills, tendency to improvise and to take superficial actions, tendency to "shine" (4,6,11).

Therefore, if psychological factors, or psychobiological ones, if one was to widen their range, can be treated as significant for the formation of specific attitudes, beliefs and social behaviours, there appears a question whether there is a relationship between psychobiological factors forming and being an element of the national character, and the social functioning of members of the nation. As the descriptions of personality traits and typical behaviours show, the features connected with motivational and emotional sphere appear very often within the Polish national character. They mainly focus around Brzezicki's skirtotymical type, Kępiński's hysterical types or within Dąbrowski's twelve negative features.

CONCLUSIONS

Generally, the descriptions of features, attitudes and behaviours treated as typical or main within the Polish na-

tional character show their psychologically and socially negative connotation. If one was to agree with Brzezicki's view that around 25% of the Polish people are skirtotymics and that 30% possess various features of the skirtotymical type, then half of the population should be treated as people who follow their unsteady emotions rather than realistic thinking. Moreover, if one was to agree with the commonly accepted view concerning greater stability or even the inertia of beliefs and attitudes psychobiologically conditioned, then, currently, the skirtotymical features are the most preserved ones.

Such a statement, if treated as true or at least highly probable, should be considered not only in the cognitive aspect, but also in the utilitarian one, referring to, among others, the social politics of a country. According to Kagan, countries have the same traits as the people who live in them (10). Therefore, the personality traits prevailing in the Polish population can have a significant influence on the formation of many social behaviours and can exert a negative impact on the quality of social and human capital resources.

The knowledge about these phenomena and their mutual relations is constantly improved and enriched by a greater number of disciplines and academic fields. Apart from the positive aspects of this multi- and interdisciplinarity in studies, there has also appeared a negative phenomenon of difficulty in creating a synthesis of the obtained results.

It seems that, parallel with the analytical trend, there is a need for periodic generalizations on the basis of the detailed results. Conclusions of a practical type that could be used in different spheres of social life and country politics may appear to be of great importance.

The disturbing phenomenon of increasing deficits within the social and human capital in Poland may therefore have its roots in the economic-political or social conditionings(1,19). It may also be connected with the psychobiological ground, on the basis of which social behaviours are also formed.

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*VISUOMENINIŲ IR ŽMOGIŠKŲJŲ RESURSŲ DEFICITO
PSICHOBIOLOGINIAI ASPEKTAI*

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Raktažodžiai: psichobiologija, žmogiškasis kapitalas, socialinis kapitalas

Santrauka

Žmogiškieji ir socialiniai resursai yra svarbūs modernios civilizacijos plėtrai. Kai visuomenės struktūra ir kokybė degraduoja, išryškėja abipusė socialinio ir žmogiškojo kapitalo stoka.

Darbo autoriai bando įvertinti šių reiškinių priežastis, sąlygas ir pasekmes, išryškindami psichologinius abiejų kapitalų aspektus, į ką sociologinėse-ekonominėse studijose neretai neatsižvelgiama, ir santykiai tarp socialinės-ekonominės situacijos, visuomenės funkcionavimo bei žmogiškojo ir socialinio kapitalo gali likti ne iki galo įvertinti.

Autoriai išaiškino, kad tarp visuomenės kokybės ir struktūros iš vienos pusės, bei socialinio ir žmogiškojo kapitalo resursų iš kitos egzistuoja abipusiški santykiai, savotiškas grįžtamasis ryšys. Visuomenės struktūrų funkcionavimo išsekimas gali būti šių kapitalų stokos priežastis ir pasekmė. Žmogiškojo ir socialinio kapitalo kokybę gali paveikti psichobiologiniai faktoriai, susiję su bendra visuomenės būkle, įskaitant asmenybės bruožus ir struktūrą individo bei visuomenės aspektu.

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